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ALBA | CHRUTHACHAIL

The Black Cuillin hills on the Isle of Skye from the road to Glen Brittle, Inner Hebrides. Photo: Ian Paterson/Scottish Viewpoint.

## SEPTEMBER 5, 2014 THR.COM/TORONTO **EPORTER**

#### IS THE WORLD READY **FOR DRONE MOVIES?**

By Pamela McClintock and Ariston Anderson

he first movie examining the morality of drone warfare has arrived and it's sure to add fuel to the debate over the growing use of the controversial technology by the Obama administration amid concern that too many civilians are being killed.

Andrew Niccol's Good Kill, starring Ethan Hawke as a troubled U.S. Air Force pilot grappling with the moral consequences of attacking from afar, makes its world premiere at the Venice Film Festival on Sept. 5 before playing at the Toronto Film Festival on Sept. 9.

Good Kill hits the big screen just as another drone movie, Eye in the Sky, prepares to start shooting Sept. 10 in South Africa. That film, directed by Gavin Hood, boasts an ensemble cast led by Colin Firth and Helen Mirren, Eyein the Sky, from Entertainment One, is larger in scope and involves both the U.S. and British governments.

Both films were made outside the Hollywood studio system and neither has U.S. distribution yet.

Good Kill, from Voltage Pictures, home of Oscar winner The Hurt Locker, takes a sometimes searing look at the CIA's drone program in Afghanistan.

Niccol (The Host, Gattaca) tells THR that he tried to be as "evenhanded" as possible but ultimately believes drones could lead to "endless" war. "After 9/11, we went into some sort of overkill mode, which I completely understand," he says. "But we also have

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OPENING-NIGHT FILM

#### The Judge

Robert Downey Jr. and Robert Duvall do what they can to elevate this overlong family and legal melodrama BY TODD MCCARTHY

father-son drama in which the struggle for a reconciliation gets swept up in an emotionally fraught murder trial, *The Judge* is well served by intense performances from stars Robert Downey Jr. and Robert Duvall, but is undercut by obvious note-hitting in the writing and a deliberate pace that drags things out about 20 minutes past their due date. This marks Downey's first non-comedy or superhero outing since The Soloist in 2009, and while this is better and far more mainstream than that misfire, the actor's box-office record in straight dramas remains spotty, suggesting a moderate commercial life for this Toronto Film Festival opening-night attraction.

Delving into a serious vein in film for the first time after making his name in comedy with the likes of Shanghai Knights, Wedding Crashers, Fred Claus and The Change-Up, director David Dobkin conscientiously battens down every hatch to the point where spontaneity has been trumped by an overcalculated fastidiousness. Every dot and comma in the script by Nick Schenk (Gran Torino) and first-timer Bill Dubuque, from a story by Dobkin and Schenk, has been tended to, just as the small-town Indiana setting looks manicured to a fare-thee-well.

Downey's hotshot Chicago lawyer Hank Palmer is anything but sympathetic, a slippery customer known for defending "only the rich and guilty," a guy whose obvious quick wit has soured into attack-mode glibness. At the outset, however, he's sobered a bit by the double-whammy of his wife's infidelity and the death of his mother, which sends him on what he intends to be a quick visit home, his first in a very long time.

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#### **Imitation Game Director Plots** Conspiracy Pic By Tatiana Siegel

s Morten Tyldum heads into the Toronto Film Festival with one of the hottest films via The Imitation Game, the Norwegian director has

signed on to helm New Regency's conspiracy film Pattern Recognition.

Based on a novel by best-selling cyberpunk author William Gibson

(Neuromancer), the project is a joint venture between New Regency and Shine Pictures.

Anthony Peckham (Sherlock Holmes, Invictus) is adapting the film, which centers on a marketing consultant with a psychological sensitivity to corporate symbols who is hired to seek the creators of film clips anonymously posted to the Internet, which leads to the uncovering of a larger conspiracy.

Ollie Madden is producing

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

#### Foreign Buyers Predict Few Blockbuster TIFF Deals

By Pamela McClintock and Scott Roxborough

he film business isn't exactly giving up on the Toronto Film Festival as a foreign sales market, but

in these lean times many sales agents and foreign buyers say they have diminished expectations as they save their best ammunition for the American Film Market in November.

Of all the film markets, Toronto is arguably the quietest because of its proximity to AFM. And many

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### THR HEAT INDEX



THOMAS J. BARRACK JR.

The chairman at once mighty Miramax sees his company make some rare noise by backing the **Jamie Dornan** starrer *The 9th Life of Louis Drax*, which Sierra/Affinity is introducing to buyers at the fest.



MARC CAIRA

The head of Canada's iconic coffee chain Tim Horton's risked triggering a whopper of a backlash when he agreed to sell out to Burger King in a \$12.5 billion merger.

KNOW YOUR DEALMAKER



Ben Browning
Co-President of Production and
Acquisitions, FilmNation

The newly appointed Browning will work alongside fellow co-president of production **Aaron Ryder** on projects including *In the Event of a Moon Disaster*, starring **Meryl Streep** and **Robert De Niro**, and **Denis Villeneuve**'s *Story of Your Life*.

#### MEANWHILE, IN THE REAL WORLD.

Joan Rivers, the tart-tongued celebrity and talk show host who reconstructed her career time and time again en route to becoming one of the most memorable female comics of all time, died at 81 in New York City following surgery on her vocal cords.

Michael Wright will replace Stacey Snider as CEO of DreamWorks Studios. The former Turner television executive, who has not previously worked in film, will start in January 2015.

Scarlett Johansson gave birth to her first child, a daughter. The father is her fiance, French journalist Romain Dauriac.

#### **Imitation Game**

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Pattern Recognition.

Tyldum's English-language debut *The Imitation Game*, which premieres Tuesday night at the festival, already is poised as a major awards-season contender from The Weinstein Co. The **Benedict Cumberbatch** starrer chronicles the true story of **Alan Turing**, a British mathematician and genius code-breaker



who helped the Allies defeat the Nazis during World War II. But Turing was never celebrated for his efforts and instead

was tried and convicted for being gay and committed suicide.

Thanks to the buzz surrounding *Imitation Game*, Tyldum has become one of the most in-demand European helmers. He also is attached to direct *Chain of Events* at Warner Bros. His Norwegian-language thriller *Headhunters* is the highest-grossing film in that country's history and has been eyed for English-language remake rights.

He is repped by WME, Anonymous Content and attorney Michael Schenkman.

TWC screened the film for Academy members and press last week in L.A., where it received an enthusiastic response.



#### **Drone Movies**

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

to ask ourselves a question, right now, if every time we kill one terrorist, we're creating 10 more."

Voltage president of production **Zev Foreman** says the film doesn't choose sides, adding that he doesn't think Republicans in particular will object to *Good Kill*.

"The truth is, the current democratic administration is doing more with the drone program than any conservative administration has done," says Foreman. "Instead of being a Democratic-Republican issue, it is about the future of war and how we plan on waging them. I think it will be hard for any president to object to drones, because in the end

they do save American lives. You aren't putting as many people at risk, but the ramifications are far-reaching."

Good Kill hopes to find a U.S. distribution deal out of Toronto, meaning it could potentially be released this year.

Eye in the Sky is aiming for a 2015 release. EOne will distribute the film in its key territories, including the U.K. Elsewhere, the film has been snapped up by independent foreign distributors.

**Xavier Marchand**, president of production for eOne, brought in *Eye in the Sky* after Hood sent him the script. "It's a dramatic war thriller about collateral damage," he says, "and provides real insight into the decisionmaking process that leads to a drone attack." **TITE** 

#### Foreign Buyers

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

foreign buyers occupy their time watching finished movies, versus prowling for projects at the script stage. In some cases, foreign sales agents will take advantage of a movie's screening at the festival to sell off foreign rights if those rights are still available.

"For presales, Toronto is pretty quiet. Honestly at this market, Lionsgate and others don't bring big movies," says **Cindy Lin**, CEO of Chinese distributor Infotainment. "So far the highest asking price is for the female version of *The Expendables*, and they haven't locked the cast for that yet."

A lucky few did manage to come armed with new high-profile projects, including FilmNation, which will be shopping *Truth*, about the scandal that prompted **Dan Rather**'s exit from the anchor chair. On the eve of Toronto, **Brett Ratner**'s RatPac Entertainment and Echo Lake came aboard to finance the indie film, starring **Robert Redford** as the iconic anchor and **Cate Blanchett** as the anchor's disgraced producer **Mary Mapes**.

Other new presale offerings include *Nice Guys*, the newly announced **Shane Black** detective film teaming **Ryan Gosling** and **Russell Crowe. Alex Walton**'s new sales outfit Bloom is shopping that film internationally (Warner Bros. already has scooped up domestic rights), while Sierra/Affinity is touting **Jean-Marc Vallee**'s *Demolition*, starring **Jake Gyllenhaal** and **Naomi Watts**, as well as **Alexandre Aja**'s *The 9th Life of Louis Drax*, starring *Fifty Shades of Grey*'s **Jamie Dornan**. NuImage/Millennium are said to be shopping *Criminal*, starring **Kevin Costner**, **Ryan Reynolds** and **Gary Oldman**.

"Thank God, Toronto is not a real market. You don't have the craziness of Cannes or AFM," says Rudiger Boss, acquisitions head at Germany's ProSiebenSat.1. The festival's reputation as a launch pad for Oscar winners like 12 Years a Slave, The King's Speech and Slumdog Millionaire means buyers will be truffling through TIFF screenings looking for the next undiscovered gem. "You go to Toronto looking for a surprise," says Boss. "We bought Slumdog Millionaire there. There's always something unexpected that makes it worth the trip."



## BETA CINEMA AT TORONTO 2014



#### THE FAREWELL PARTY

"Witty and touching." (SCREEN)

"Beautifully acted...a tender, unexpectedly charming tale..." (THE HOLLYWOOD REPORTER)

DIRECTOR Sharon Maymon and Tal Granit

CAST Ze'ev Revach

Levana Finkelshtein Aliza Rozen Ilan Dar Rafi Tabor



#### SCREENINGS

TOMORROW | Sep 6 | 07:00 pm Scotiabank 10 | P&I

Sunday | Sep 7 | 04:30 pm Scotiabank 14 | PUBLIC

Tuesday | Sep 9 | 01:45 pm Scotiabank 3 | PUBLIC

Wednesday | Sep 10 | 09:00 am Scotiabank 7 | P&I

Sunday | Sep 14 | 09:15 pm Scotiabank 14 | PUBLIC

#### **LABYRINTH OF LIES**

A true story. A young prosecutor in postwar West Germany investigates a massive conspiracy to cover up the Nazi pasts of prominent public figures.

DIRECTOR Giulio Ricciarelli

CAST Alexander Fehling (INGLOURIOUS BASTERDS)

André Szymanski

Friederike Becht (THE READER, HANNAH

ARENDT) Johann von Bülow Gert Voss



#### SCREENINGS

TODAY | Sep 5 | 02:15 pm Scotiabank 10 | P&I

TOMORROW | Sep 6 | 08:45 pm Scotiabank 2 | WORLD PREMIERE

Monday | Sep 8 | 10:00 pm Scotiabank 13 | PUBLIC

Tuesday | Sep 9 | 07:00 pm Scotiabank 10 | P&I

Friday | Sep 12 | 09:00 pm Scotiabank 3 | PUBLIC

#### **TOUR DE FORCE**

While on a cycling tour of Belgium, a close-knit group of friends must deal with one of their members' decision to end his life with dignity, in this poignant and deeply felt drama.

DIRECTOR Christian Zübert (THREE QUARTER MOON)
CAST Florian David Fitz (VINCENT WANTS TO SEA)

Julia Koschitz

Jürgen Vogel (THE WAVE, THE FREE WILL) Johannes Allmayer (VINCENT WANTS TO SEA) Volker Bruch (GENERATION WAR)

Miriam Stein (GENERATION WAR)



#### **SCREENINGS**

Sunday | Sep 7 | 09:15 am Scotiabank 14 | P&I

Monday | Sep 8 | 06:45 pm Scotiabank 3 | PUBLIC

Wednesday | Sep 10 | 11:15 am TIFF Bell Lightbox 3 | PUBLIC

Sunday | Sep 14 | 12:45 pm Isabel Bader Theatre | PUBLIC

#### **GOMORRAH**

The first 2 episodes.

Based on Roberto Saviano's bestseller and the Cannes Grand Jury Prize winning feature film by Matteo Garrone

DIRECTOR Stefano Sollima (ROMANZO CRIMINALE)

Claudio Cupellini (A QUIET LIFE)

Francesca Comencini

CAST Marco d'Amore (A QUIET LIFE)

Fortunato Cerlino Maria Pia Calzone Salvatore Esposito



#### SCREENINGS

TOMORROW | Sep 6 | 06:00 pm Scotiabank 1 | PUBLIC

Monday | Sep 8 | 11:30 am Scotiabank 7 | P&I

Saturday | Sep 13 | 06:15 pm TIFF Bell Lightbox 1 | PUBLIC



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## *Birdman*, Cumberbatch Spark Awards Season Buzz in Venice, Telluride

By Scott Roxborough and Tim Appelo

wards season officially has begun and the Venice and Telluride film festivals have produced a crop of contenders — most of them screening in Toronto — for distributors hoping to land one of this year's big winners.

The best actor category already is looking tight, with a major frontrunner in Benedict **Cumberbatch** as British codebreaker Alan

Turing in The Weinstein Co.'s The Imitation Game, which premiered in Telluride ahead of its Sept. 9 TIFF bow. But Michael Keaton's performance in Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu's Venice opener Birdman could give him some competition, and the actor has a chance to nab his first Oscar nom for what THR chief film critic Todd McCarthy called a "fearless, glamour-free portrait of a washed-up star.'

Fox Searchlight also is pushing *Birdman* as an awards contender for multiple Oscar

nominee Inarritu.

Another Telluride title generating awards heat is Jean-Marc Vallee's Wild, putting long-absent Reese Witherspoon back in the awards mix as a promiscuous heroin user who goes on a 1,100-mile solo hike.

> No single Oscar-bound behemoth dominated Telluride, but there were several smaller films and documentaries that shined.

Ethan Hawke's doc Seymour: An *Introduction*, about piano prodigy turned teacher Seymour Bernstein, and Gabe Polsky's Red Army, about the 1980 Soviet hockey team, are frontrunners in the best documentary race.

Aside from *Birdman*, which is not screening at TIFF, Venice put forward few obvious award titles, though Ramin Bahrani's housing crisis drama 99 Homes, starring Andrew Garfield, Laura Dern and Michael Shannon, was well received and could be a darkhorse contender.



#### 🌞 TIFF IN BRIEF 🤻



#### LIONSGATE TAKES NORM

Lionsgate has picked up North American rights to animated feature Norm of the North, with Good Universe handling international sales in Toronto. The film, set for an early 2016 release, follows polar bear Norm and his three ragtag lemming pals who set off on a trip to New York City to try to save their Arctic home from a maniacal land developer. Ken Jeong (The Hangover) and Loretta Devine (Grey's Anatomy) lend their voices.

#### **NYMPHOMANIAC'S MARTIN** TO STAR IN TAJ MAHAL

Stacy Martin, the young English actress who stars in Lars von Trier's erotic epic Nymphomaniac, has signed on to star in Taj Mahal, a high-concept thriller set during the 2008 terrorist attacks in Mumbai, India. French screenwriter Nicolas Saada (Sleepless Night) will write and helm the project.

#### DOGWOOF DOES DEALS FOR DIOR AND I

Brit-based sales agent Dogwoof has closed multiple territory deals for Dior and I, Frederic Tcheng's documentary about Dior designer Raf Simons. The film, which features interviews with Jennifer Lawrence, Sharon Stone and Marion Cotillard, premiered in Tribeca.

#### **EONE TEAMS WITH VIMEO**

Entertainment One Films U.S. is partnering with Vimeo to release four fall releases simultaneously in theaters and on VOD. The rollout starts with the North American release of the Michelle Monaghan-starrer Fort Bliss, directed by Claudia Myers, on Sept. 19. That's followed by Ryan Phillippe's directorial debut Catch Hell receiving a day-anddate release on Oct. 10, the feature doc The Culture High on Oct. 17 and A Merry Friggin Christmas, starring the late Robin Williams and Joel McHale, on Nov. 7.

#### **RELATIVITY PICKS UP WOMAN IN BLACK 2**

Relativity has scooped up U.S. distribution rights to The Woman in Black 2. Sources peg the deal in the low seven figures. It is unclear if Daniel Radcliffe will return for the sequel of the horror film that became a breakout in 2012, earning \$128 million worldwide. The first film received a wide release in the U.S. from CBS Films.

## Karpen's Bleecker Street Staffs Up

By Pamela McClintock

ndrew Karpen's Bleecker Street has announced its first key hires as the new U.S. distribution company makes its debut at the Toronto

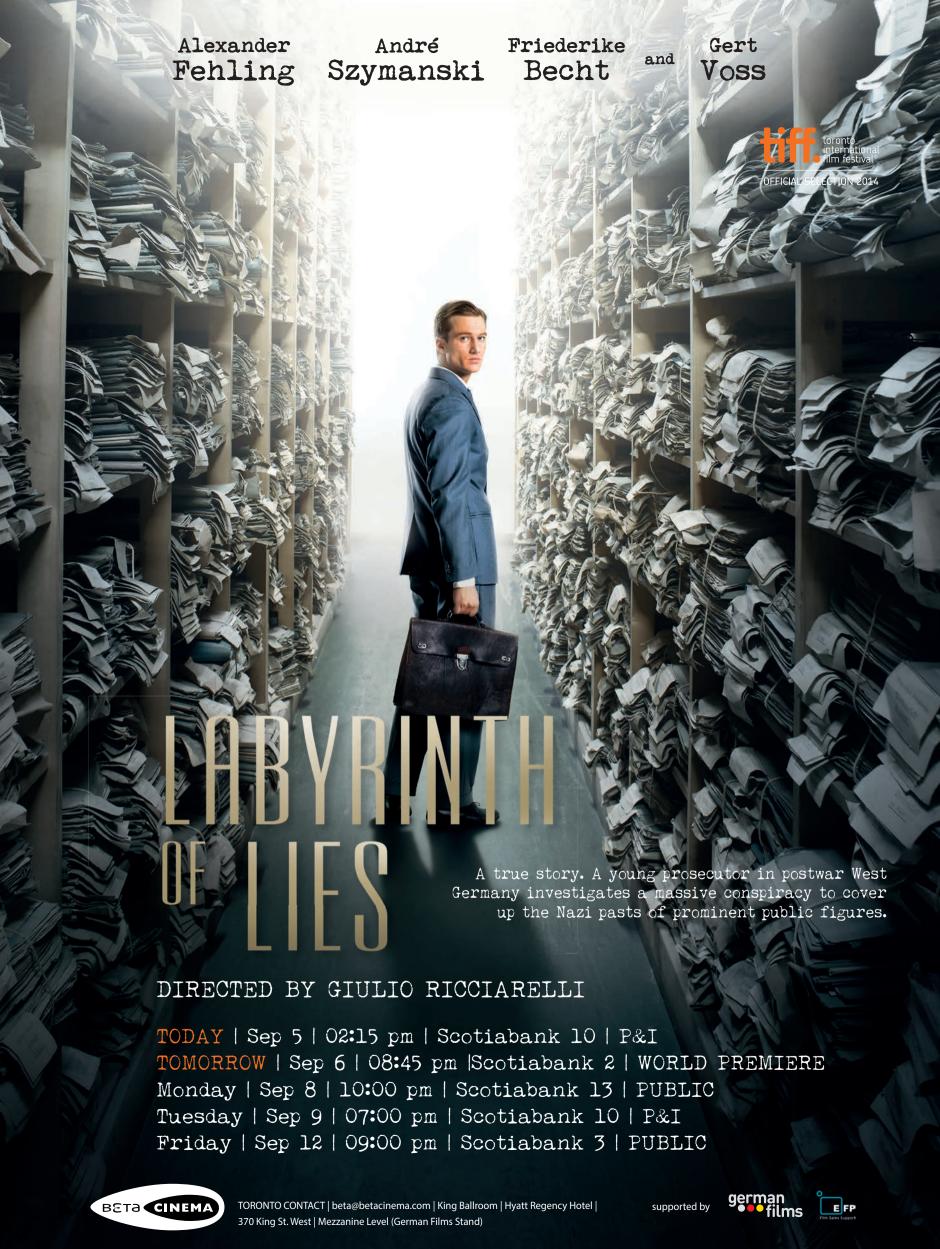
Film Festival. Jack Foley has been named president of distribution, while Myles Bender will serve as president of market-

ing and creative advertising. Tyler DiNapoli has joined Bleecker Street as president of marketing, media and research, and Kent Sanderson will be president of acquisitions and ancillary distribution. All four executives worked with Karpen at Focus Features.

Karpen and his team will be aggressively scouting for films at Toronto. The New York-based Bleecker Street intends to release three to five films next year, and expand from there.

Karpen announced he was leaving Focus late last year after Peter Schlessel took over as CEO upon the exit of longtime CEO James Schamus. Karpen joined Focus as COO in 2002 before being promoted to president in 2006 and co-CEO in 2012.

Foley, who has worked in the business for three decades, served as president of distribution at Focus. His prior gigs included Miramax, Columbia Pictures and USA Films.



#### SVENSK AND STUDIOCANAL JOIN FORCES

by Scott Roxborough

Svensk has signed an output deal with France's Studiocanal that will see Svensk take all rights in Nordic territories for new Studiocanal films.

The deal includes a number of high-profile titles being shopped in Toronto including Macbeth, starring Michael Fassbender and Marion Cotillard; Paddington featuring Ben Whishaw and Nicole Kidman; and animated feature Shaun the Sheep. The deal also will see the two giants join forces on English-language co-productions set in the Nordic territories. Svensk will handle distribution for Scandinavia while Studiocanal takes international rights. Two such projects in development are the English-language remake of Swedish crime hit Easy Money and the thriller The White Island, the English-language debut of Swedish director Jens Jonsson.

#### Julia Can Keep Gwyneth's Secret by Borys Kit

ulia Roberts is in negotiations to join Gwyneth Paltrow and Chiwetel Ejiofor in the English-language remake of the Argentinian thriller *The Secret in Their Eyes*.

Billy Ray wrote the script and is directing the project, which IM Global is selling in Toronto.

In a testament to how much Roberts is desired, her role



initially was
earmarked for a
male actor, but
Ray rewrote it
specifically for the
actress. The film
also was to have

shot in Boston but now will shoot in L.A. The original Spanish-language movie, written and directed by Juan Jose Campanella, told the story of a retired attorney who seeks closure for an unsolved case and for his unrequited love of his former boss by writing a book. It won the Oscar for best foreign-language film in 2010.

#### Sellers Bullish Despite 2013 TIFF Flops

Even after last year's misfires (*The F Word*?!), summer indie hits and new buyers spark optimism

By Tatiana Siegel and Pamela McClintock

ellers are optimistic that there will be plenty of significant acquisitions out of Toronto, where several stardriven projects are looking for a U.S. home.

This year's lineup features a range of titles with commercial potential including Chris Rock's Top Five and Noah Baumbach's While We're Young, both produced by Scott Rudin. Other films receiving buzz are the Beach Boys biopic Love & Mercy, the Tobey Maguire chess drama Pawn Sacrifice, Oren Moverman's Before We Go with Richard Gere as a homeless man and Tom McCarthy's The Cobbler featuring Adam Sandler.

But a look at the big sellers from recent festivals might give buyers pause. Several high-profile 2013 Toronto titles either bombed or didn't live up to expectations including *Begin Again* (formerly titled *Can a Song Save Your Life?*). The Weinstein Co. plunked down a record-setting \$7 million (plus a \$20 million P&A



commitment) for U.S. rights to the music-themed film, which has earned \$16 million domestically to date. Similarly, Focus Features scooped up the Jason Batemanhelmed R-rated comedy *Bad Words* for \$7 million. The film's less-than-\$8 million haul in the U.S. barely eclipsed its sale price.

So why aren't buyers and sellers frowning? "The spring and summer certainly were good for some independent films, so I think people are relatively bullish," says Roadside Attractions chief Howard Cohen. And despite the disappointments, the indie marketplace has plenty of recent success stories including *The Grand Budapest Hotel*, *Belle*, *A Most* 

Wanted Man and Boyhood.

Several new U.S. distributors will be in the mix. They include Andrew Karpen's Bleecker Street, backed by billionaire Manoj Bhargava; Haim Saban's Saban Films; and EuropaCorp, which has a new distribution deal with Relativity. "I think there is a big appetite for product," says UTA's Rena Ronson. ICM's Jessica Lacy agrees, "These new buyers are going to be hungry."

Just how hungry remains to be seen. Says Saban Films president **Bill Bromiley:** "There are a lot of films that could make sense for our business model, which is castdriven, commercial product, or prestige titles."

#### McTeigue Boards Sci-fi *Sleeper Cell*

By Borys Kit

ames McTeigue, the Wachowskis protege who directed the Natalie Portman-starrer V for Vendetta, has boarded Alien Sleeper Cell, a sci-fi thriller from Scanbox Studios, the new company from Joe Gatta and Joni Sighvatsson.

ScanBox has put together international financing deals for the project in multiple territories, with most of Western Europe and the Middle East already sold. ScanBox is teaming with Adrian Askarieh's Prime Universe Films to produce *Cell*.

Plot details are being kept under wraps but elements hearken to *Bourne Identity* and TV's *The Americans* but applied to an alien-invasion scenario.

The script was written by Morgan Davis Foehl, an up-and-coming writer who is generating buzz for such projects as Michael Mann's *Cyber*.

**Felipe Linz**, who came up with the concept, is exec producing.

McTeigue, who was a first assistant director on the Wachowski siblings' *Matrix* movies as well as on *Star Wars: Episode II*, is repped by CAA and Jackoway Tyerman.

#### LaBeouf, Oldman Join *Man Down*

by Scott Roxborough

hia LaBeouf, House of Cards alum Kate Mara and Oscar-nominated actor Gary Oldman have

signed on to star in *Man Down*, a psychological thriller from director **Dito Montiel** (*A Guide to Recognizing Your Saints*).

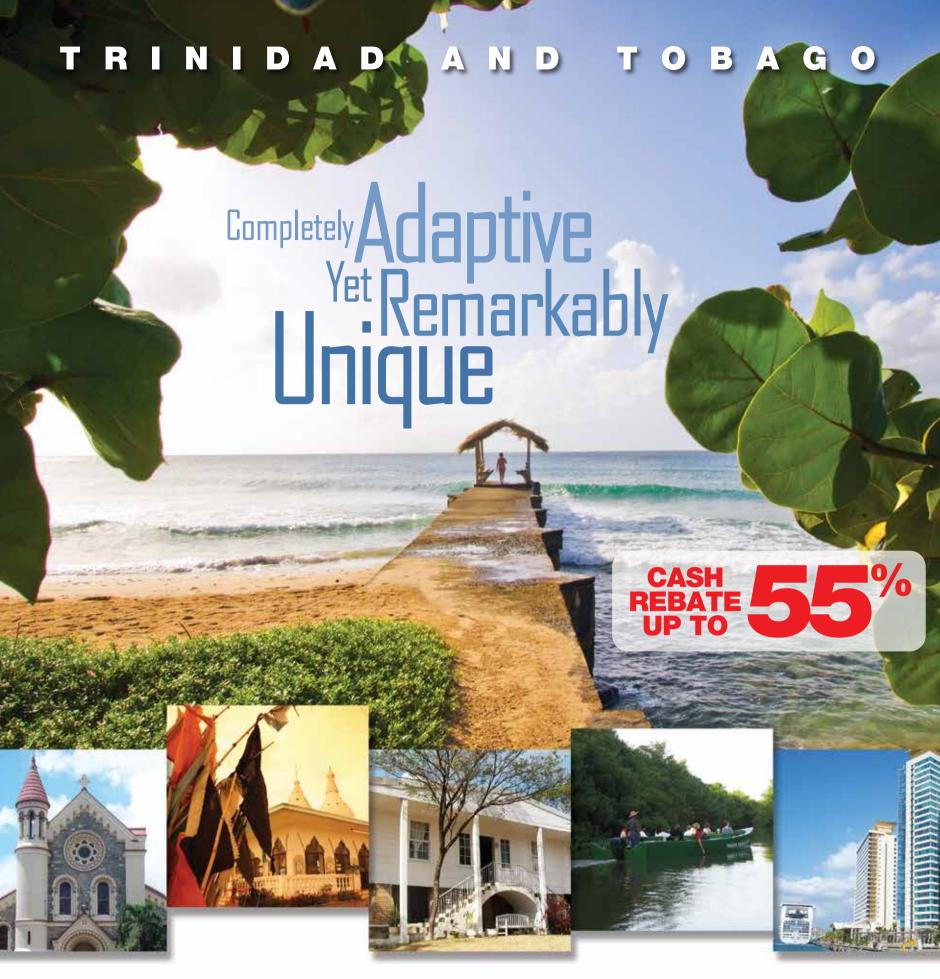
Screenwriter Adam Simon (Synapse) penned the script to Man Down, about an Afghanistan war veteran haunted by his experiences who is searching for his family in a postapocalyptic America.

The Solution Group is handling international sales for the project and will be pitching it to buyers here. Dawn Krantz, Stephen McEveety and Jon Burton are producing the film, with shooting set to start Oct. 30 in Louisiana. The Solution's Lisa Wilson and Myles Nestel are executive producing the project alongside Roger Goff.









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THE SURPRISE GUEST AT TORONTO'S "BILL MURRAY DAY" ON SEPT. 5? BILL MURRAY. WHILE THE FEST IS keeping mum ("You never know who may show up for a post-screening Q&A," reads its website), Ivan Reitman tells *THR* he'll do a Q&A with his friend and frequent collaborator, in town for the premiere of his film *St. Vincent*. "It's going to be fun," Reitman says. Gear up by taking a peek into the one-of-a-kind life and times of Murray, 63, below.



#### HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW BILL MURRAY?

Take the THR quiz to find out BY JUSTIN SHADY

1. In February, the 65th
Berlinale opened with Wes
Anderson's The Grand
Budapest Hotel. When Murray
arrived at the premiere, he
exited the car holding:
A. the Golden Globe he won for
Lost in Translation
B. a full martini glass, which he
then downed in one gulp
C. his pants

#### 2. What famous scene did Murray almost completely improvise?

**A.** Ghostbusters, where Dr.
Peter Venkman discusses Walter
Peck's lack of manhood

B. Scrooged, where Eliot
Loudermilk chases Frank Cross
around the office with a shotgun
C. Caddyshack, where Ty
Webb plays through Carl
Spackler's house

#### 3. Why did Murray agree to voice *Garfield*?

**A.** Because *Garfield* creator Jim Davis was one of his childhood idols

**B.** Because, like *Garfield*, he hates Mondays

**C.** Because he thought the Joel Cohen who wrote the script was actually Joel Coen of Coen brothers fame

#### 4. Which iconic role does

Murray regret turning down? **A.** Frank Ginsburg in

Little Miss Sunshine **B.** Lester Burnham in

American Beauty

C. Dr. Malcolm Crowe in
The Sixth Sense

5. How many Wes Anderson films has Murray appeared in?

A. Four

B. Six C. Seven

6. Murray accidentally broke the nose of which actor during the filming of which film? A. Robert De Niro during

Mad Dog and Glory

B. Gene Hackman during

The Royal Tenenbaums
C. Johnny Depp during Ed Wood

#### Best of Bill: A Critic's Take

By Michael Rechtshaffen



**Groundhog Day** (1993) The comic gem about a selfimportant TV meterorologist remains the most resonant of the Murray-Harold Ramis collaborations.



**Ghostbusters** (1984) Murray's Dr. Peter Venkman memorably busted a move into pop-culture history with, "We came. We saw. We kicked its ass."



Lost in Translation (2003) Murray received his only Oscar acting nom for his poignant take on a fading American movie star who's still big in Japan.



**Rushmore** (1998) Written with Murray in mind, the role redefined his screen persona following ill-fitting turns like co-starring with an elephant in *Larger Than Life*.



Caddyshack (1980) It was supposed to be a bit part, but Murray's loose, improvisational approach easily upstaged the top-billed Chevy Chase.



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#### FESTIVAL SCREENING GUIDE

#### **TODAY**

**8:30 A.M. Charlie's Country,** Scotiabank 14, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, Contemporary World Cinema

**9:15 A.M.** *Winter Sleep*, Scotiabank 9, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, Masters

9:30 A.M. *The Lesson*, Scotiabank 8, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, Contemporary World Cinema

9:45 A.M. Bird People, Scotiabank 13, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, Contemporary World Cinema; The Tale of the Princess Kaguya, Scotiabank 1, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, Masters

10:45 A.M. Kabukicho Love Hotel, Scotiabank 14, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, Contemporary World Cinema; Trick or Treaty?, Scotiabank 11, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, Masters

11:00 A.M. Li'l Quinquin, Scotiabank 10, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, Contemporary World Cinema; Mommy, Scotiabank 2, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, Special Presentations

11:30 A.M. Horse Money, Scotiabank 5, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, Wavelengths; Mary Kom, Scotiabank 3, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, Special Presentations

11:45 A.M. Not My Type, Scotiabank 7, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, Contemporary World Cinema; What We Do in the Shadows, Scotiabank 4, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, Midnight Madness

12:00 P.M. Gett, The Trial of Viviane A.M.Salem, Scotiabank 8, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, Contemporary World Cinema; The Judge, Princess of Wales, Press & Industry, Gala Presentations; *Whiplash*, Scotiabank 12, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, Special Presentations

12:30 P.M. Breathe, Scotiabank 13, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, Contemporary World Cinema; National Gallery, Scotiabank 6, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, TIFF Docs

12:45 P.M. Two Days, One Night, Scotiabank 1, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, Special Presentations

1:15 P.M. Scarlet Innocence, Scotiabank 9, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, City to City; Two Shots Fired, Scotiabank 11, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, Contemporary World Cinema

1:30 P.M. *The Crow's Egg*, Scotiabank 14, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, Discovery

**2:00 P.M.** *Mr. Turner*, Scotiabank 2, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, Special Presentations

**2:15 P.M.** *Jauja*, Scotiabank 7, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, Wavelengths

2:30 P.M. The Dead Lands, Scotiabank 13, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, Special Presentations; Timbuktu, Scotiabank 3, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, Masters

2:45 P.M. '71, Scotiabank 12, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, Discovery; From What Is Before, Scotiabank 5, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, Wavelengths; Laggies, Scotiabank 4, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, Gala Presentations; The Kingdom of Dreams and Madness, Scotiabank 8, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, TIFF Docs

**3:00 P.M.** *MAIDAN*, Scotiabank 10, Scotiabank



**3:45 P.M.** *Xenia*, Scotiabank 14, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, Contemporary World Cinema

**4:00 P.M.** *Voice Over*, Scotiabank 6, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, Contemporary World Cinema

4:15 P.M. Silvered Water, Syria Self-Portrait, Scotiabank 11, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, TIFF Docs; Stories of Our Lives, Scotiabank 9, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, Discovery

**4:45 P.M.** *Mirage*, Scotiabank 7, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, Contemporary World Cinema

5:00 P.M. The Valley, Scotiabank 3, Scotiabank Theatre, Public, Contemporary World Cinema; UNLUCKY PLAZA, Scotiabank 13, Scotiabank Theatre, Public, Discovery

5:15 P.M. Clouds of Sils Maria, Scotiabank 12, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, Special Presentations; Frailer, Scotiabank 4, Scotiabank Theatre, Public, Contemporary World Cinema; Run, Scotiabank 8, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, Discovery

**5:45 P.M.** *Aire Libre*, Scotiabank 2, Scotiabank Theatre, Public, Contemporary World Cinema

6:00 P.M. Elaquent, The Steve & Rashmi Gupta Family Stage, King Street, Public, The Rdio Music Zone and Steve & Rashmi Gupta Family Stage; Girlhood, Scotiabank 10, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, Contemporary World Cinema; Scarlet Innocence, Ryerson Theatre, Ryerson, Public, City to City; The Humbling, Visa Screening Room (Elgin), Elgin/Winter Garden Theatres, Public, Special Presentations

6:15 P.M. A Dream of Iron, Scotiabank 9, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, City to City; It Follows, Scotiabank 6, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, Midnight Madness

6:30 P.M. Mardan, Scotiabank 11, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, Discovery; Still the Water, Scotiabank 14, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, Contemporary World Cinema; The Judge, Princess of Wales, Public, Gala Presentations

Not My Type

7:00 P.M. Dearest, Winter Garden Theatre, Elgin/ Winter Garden Theatres, Public, Special Presentations; Sunshine Superman, Scotiabank 1, Scotiabank Theatre, Public, TIFF Docs

**7:10 P.M.** *Maylee Todd*, The Steve & Rashmi Gupta Family Stage, King Street, Public, The Rdio Music Zone and Steve & Rashmi Gupta Family Stage

**7:30 P.M.** *Life in a Fishbowl*, Scotiabank 8, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, Discovery

8:00 P.M. The Judge, Roy Thomson Hall, Public, Gala Presentations; The Voices, Scotiabank 12, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, Vanguard

**8:15 P.M.** *Corbo*, Scotiabank 13, Scotiabank Theatre, Public, Discovery

8:30 P.M. Rich Aucoin, The Steve & Rashmi Gupta Family Stage, King Street, Public, The Rdio Music Zone and Steve & Rashmi Gupta Family Stage; The Grump, Scotiabank 4, Scotiabank Theatre, Public, Contemporary World Cinema







#### FESTIVAL SCREENING GUIDE

8:45 P.M. *Alleluia*, Scotiabank 9, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, Vanguard; *Shrew's Nest*, Scotiabank 2, Scotiabank Theatre, Public, Vanguard

9:00 P.M. Mary Kom, Visa
Screening Room (Elgin), Elgin/
Winter Garden Theatres,
Public, Special Presentations;
The Dead Lands, Ryerson
Theatre, Ryerson, Public,
Special Presentations;
The Lesson, Scotiabank 3,
Scotiabank Theatre, Public,
Contemporary World Cinema;
The Tribe, Scotiabank 14,
Scotiabank Theatre, Press &
Industry, Discovery

9:45 P.M. Clouds of Sils Maria, Princess of Wales, Public, Special Presentations

10:00 P.M. Adrian X, The Steve & Rashmi Gupta Family Stage, King Street, Public, The Rdio Music Zone and Steve & Rashmi Gupta Family Stage

**11:59 P.M.** *Tokyo Tribe*, Ryerson Theatre, Ryerson, Public, Midnight Madness

#### **TOMORROW SEPT. 5**

8:30 A.M. *Corbo*, Scotiabank 14, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, Discovery; *Don't Breathe*, Scotiabank 5, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, Contemporary World Cinema 8:45 A.M. Far From Men, Scotiabank 11, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, Special Presentations; Flapping in the Middle of Nowhere, Scotiabank 7, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, Discovery; The Grump, Scotiabank 9, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, Contemporary World Cinema

9:00 A.M. Dearest, Scotiabank 13, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, Special Presentations; Force Majeure, Scotiabank 3, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, Special Presentations; Haemoo,, Princess of Wales, Press & Industry, Gala Presentations; Iraqi Odyssey, Scotiabank 6, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, TIFF Docs; Monsoon, Scotiabank 2, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, TIFF Docs; The Lesson, Cinema 3, TIFF Bell Lightbox, Public, Contemporary World Cinema

9:15 A.M. Aire Libre, Scotiabank 8, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, Contemporary World Cinema

9:30 A.M. Clouds of Sils Maria, Cinema 1, TIFF Bell Lightbox, Public, Special Presentations; Dukhtar, Scotiabank 10, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, Discovery; Festival 101,
Vimeo Industry Convergence
Centre - Room B, Canadian
Broadcasting Centre, Industry
Programming, Industry
Conference Friday, September
5 - Creative Process; The
Sound and the Fury,
Scotiabank 1, Scotiabank
Theatre, Press & Industry,
Special Presentations

10:00 A.M. Gemma Bovery,
Scotiabank 4, Scotiabank
Theatre, Press & Industry,
Special Presentations;
Master Class, Glenn Gould
Studio, Canadian Broadcasting
Centre, Industry Programming,
Industry Conference Friday,
September 5 - Creative
Process; Stripes, Cinema 2,
TIFF Bell Lightbox, Public,
Special Events Festival 14

10:30 A.M. Hector and the Search for Happiness, Scotiabank 12, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, Special Presentations

11:00 A.M. Gentlemen, Scotiabank 9, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, Special Presentations; Theeb, Scotiabank 5, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, Discovery

11:15 A.M. *Preggoland*, Scotiabank 11, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, Special Presentations

11:30 A.M. Felix and Meira, Scotiabank 7, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, Contemporary World Cinema; The Humbling, Ryerson Theatre, Ryerson, Public, Special Presentations; The Humbling, Scotiabank 3, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, Special Presentations

11:45 A.M. Aire Libre, Cinema 3, TIFF Bell Lightbox, Public, Contemporary World Cinema; Coming Home, Scotiabank 13, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, Special Presentations; Murder in Pacot, Scotiabank 8, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, Masters; Telefilm Canada's Talent to Watch: Maps to the Talent - New **Directions for Directors,** Glenn Gould Studio, Canadian Broadcasting Centre, Industry Programming, Industry Conference Friday, September 5 - Creative Process

12:00 P.M. A Pigeon Sat on a Branch Reflecting on Existence, Scotiabank 2, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, Masters; Samba, Princess of Wales, Press & Industry, Gala Presentations; Sunshine Superman, Scotiabank 10, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, TIFF Docs; The Dead Lands, The Bloor Hot Docs Cinema, Public, Special Presentations

12:15 P.M. In Comparison, Cinema 4 - Paul & Leah Atkinson Family Cinema, TIFF Bell Lightbox, Public, Cinematheque; Labyrinthus, Scotiabank 6, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, TIFF Kids

**12:30 P.M.** *The Judge*, Roy Thomson Hall, Public, Gala Presentations

12:45 P.M. Groundhog Day, Cinema 2, TIFF Bell Lightbox, Public, Special Events Festival 14; Madame Bovary, Scotiabank 4, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, Special Presentations; *The Look of Silence*, Scotiabank 1, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, TIFF Docs

1:00 P.M. Mavericks Conversation With Robert Duvall, Cinema 1, TIFF Bell Lightbox, Public, 2014, MAV

1:15 P.M. Leviathan, Scotiabank 14, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, Masters

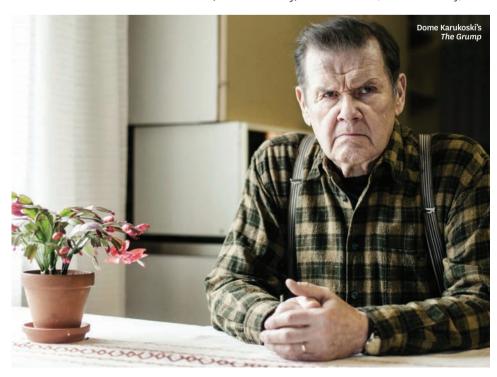
1:30 P.M. *Alive*, Scotiabank 5, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, City to City

1:45 P.M. Shrew's Nest, Scotiabank 9, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, Vanguard

2:00 P.M. 1001 Grams, Scotiabank 3, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, Masters: Cruel Story of Youth, Cinema 4 - Paul & Leah Atkinson Family Cinema, TIFF Bell Lightbox, Public, Cinematheque; Hungry Hearts, Scotiabank 11, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, Special Presentations; Industry Dialogues: World-**Building: Screenwriters** and Production Designers, Glenn Gould Studio, Canadian Broadcasting Centre, Industry Programming, Industry Conference Friday, September 5 - Creative Process; The Little Death, Scotiabank 7, Scotiabank Theatre, Press & Industry, Discovery

2:15 P.M. Labyrinth of Lies,
Scotiabank 10, Scotiabank
Theatre, Press & Industry,
Contemporary World Cinema;
Over Your Dead Body,
Scotiabank 13, Scotiabank
Theatre, Press & Industry,
Vanguard; Wild Tales,
Scotiabank 2, Scotiabank
Theatre, Press & Industry,
Special Presentations

**2:30 P.M.** *Dearest*, Ryerson Theatre, Ryerson, Public, Special Presentations *THR* 





**YOUR GUIDE TO** CANADA'S RONTO





## Maps to the Talent: New Directions

Friday, September 5 11:45 - 12:30 Glenn Gould Studio

Whether it's about transitioning from shorts to features, the creative possibilities offered by new technologies or the cultural, artistic and linguistic diversity of our landscape, young directors at various stages of their careers reflect on the art of storytelling and engaging audiences.

#### **Mathieu Denis, CORBO**

A teenage Quebecer in the 1960s evolves from pro-independence activist to radical terrorist, in this gripping chronicle of the origins of the FLQ in the decade preceding the 1970 October Crisis by solo feature debut director Mathieu Denis.

#### **Andrea Dorfman, HEARTBEAT**

Stuck in a go-nowhere job and a DOA personal life, a discombobulated Halifax twentysomething (singer-songwriter Tanya Davis) finds salvation by returning to her musical roots, in this vibrant comedy-drama from Festival veteran Andrea Dorfman (Love That Boy).

#### Jeffrey St. Jules, BANG BANG BABY

Canadian short-film dynamo Jeffrey St. Jules makes his feature debut with this surreal, fever-dream fusion of small-town musical and 1950s sci-fi. Writer/director St. Jules developed the film at the Cannes Film Festival Residence Program.

#### **Jacob Tierney, PREGGOLAND**

Festival favourite Jacob Tierney (*The Trotsky*) directs this saucy, sharply-written comedydrama about a boozing, live-at-home thirtysomething (screenwriter-star Sonja Bennett) who finds her world turned upside down when she lies about being pregnant.

#### **Moderator: RICHARD CROUSE**

Richard Crouse is a film critic for CTV's Canada AM. From 1998 to 2008, he hosted *Reel to Real*, Canada's TV longest running show about movies. His syndicated radio show, *Entertainment Extra*, originates on News Talk 1010 in Toronto. He has written books on pop culture history and writes weekly columns for Metro newspaper.



# Where Is My Audience? Sunday, September 7 11:45 - 12:30 Glenn Gould Studio

Insights about the latest trends and patterns in audience behaviour based on recent consumer analysis. What does this mean for the release of my film?

#### **Keynote Speaker: MICHAEL GUBBINS**

Michael Gubbins is an analyst and consultant, working in the international film, entertainment and media industries, with particular expertise in on-demand and digital change. He is the chair of the Ffilm Cymru Wales and the co-founder of consultancy SampoMedia. Gubbins is former editor of Screen International. He is a member of Experts Committee, of Europa Cinemas, a member of the British Screen Advisory Council and a board member of Power to the Pixel and the Met Film School. Gubbins is a chair and keynote speaker at conferences around the world.

# How Do I Engage with My Audience? Wednesday, September 10 11:45 - 12:30 Glenn Gould Studio

Insights about changing technology and the impact on how audiences view films. How does the producer adapt to the new realities of audience behaviour and distribution platforms that are transforming cinema?

**Keynote Speaker: MICHAEL GUBBINS** 

Meet us at the Canada Lounge in the Festival's Industry Centre

#### TELEFILM SPOTLIGHT ON CANADA



## Telefilm's Top Exec Talks Cannes, Canada and Cash

With \$100 million to finance local films, Carolle Brabant has seen her investment pay off as festival darlings Xavier Dolan and David Cronenberg prepare to take Toronto BY ETAN VLESSING

S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE CANADIAN government's film financier, Carolle Brabant of Telefilm Canada is behind the country's top movie releases at home and overseas. Now Brabant, who oversees \$100 million in annual Canadian film investment and has been with the company in various roles since 1990, heads to Toronto riding a critical wave out of Cannes from two beneficiaries of Telefilm coin, David Cronenberg's Maps to the Stars and Xavier Dolan's Mommy. Both became Palme d'Or contenders and went on to earn top prizes at the French fest: Maps won its star Julianne Moore the actress award, and Dolan's film shared the jury prize with Jean-Luc Godard's Goodbye to Language.

The 61-year-old Brabant, who is married with two children, spoke to THR in her Montreal office about how to get Canadian stars on the Hollywood radar, helping with Oscar campaigns and Telefilm's push to help develop fresh talent.

You've just come back from New York City, where you showcased Canadian films that will be at the Toronto film festival, and you're off to L.A. to do the same. What is your strategy in terms of reaching out to the U.S. industry before Toronto?

This is a very nice partnership with Toronto. Every year, it has become the kickoff of our TIFF efforts. In New York, there was a great crowd attending. It's about building up excitement around the Canadian presence at Toronto. Now we've decided to do the same promotion in Los

Angeles. The goal is to spotlight some of the films from either emerging talent or films that are still looking for a distributor, to put them on the agenda of those coming to Toronto. It's also a nice occasion, apart from the busy craziness of TIFF, for the film team to meet distributors and representatives from festivals and the media.

## Is this also about getting Canadian titles on the Hollywood radar before the festival so American buyers don't overlook them in Toronto?

That's exactly what we want to do. It's working. Every year, it's an occasion for people to meet representatives from the States and to put films on their agenda.

Canadian films had real success in Cannes, with competition titles like Xavier Dolan's *Mommy* and David



#### Cronenberg's Maps to the Stars both receiving prizes. How are you going to exploit that attention in Toronto?

Our objective with TIFF is to make sure Canadian films are well promoted and to make people more aware of what is happening. Some of the films will be able to get that attention without our help. *Maps to the Stars* and *Mommy* already have a spotlight from Cannes. But we are doing the Talent to Watch program again this year in Toronto to help emerging talent. Different this year is, we contacted a distribution expert, Michael Gubbins, to organize two conversations with

Canadian cinema is booming right now: Quebec directors are shooting English-language movies and Hollywood films. Short-film makers are jumping to features. How do you see the industry shaping up?

It's hard to say or predict what will happen. What I find exciting is the diversity and our different voices. Contrary to when Quebec filmmakers were in the spotlight, it's coming from all regions of Canada now. I hope we're taking some credit for that after our Not Short on Talent initiative in Cannes. It's all connecting us sooner with filmmakers across the country as they develop projects. When they are coming to us with

"In Quebec there's a star system and people are aware of Denis Villeneuve and others. We want people from Alberta to know Kyle Thomas and for people from Saskatchewan to recognize Jefferson Moneo."

our talent about how to find audiences. It's an interesting conversation to have, particularly this year where we have in Toronto nine first features. And it's a strong year for our Western filmmakers. We have Kyle Thomas, one of our microbudget filmmakers, with *The Valley Below*. We'll put the spotlight on that.

#### You are bringing back your Birks Diamond Tribute to spotlight women actors and directors who excelled in the past year.

We will celebrate again five women directors and five women actors whose careers on the international scene were highlighted this past year. And we have a new initiative in Toronto, where the festival will close down King Street and we will do an activity aimed at the public. My team will produce a trivia game show about Canadian cinema, with our TIFF Rising Stars competing against established Canadian filmmakers. The idea is to get the audience to see what's exciting about Canadian cinema.

their first feature, we already know them and what they have been doing. And we can help them make their second feature. The result is we're seeing a lot of talented Canadian filmmakers.

#### How do you help experienced Canadian directors as they look to transition to making their name on the world stage?

We want to be there to support the careers of more experienced filmmakers. That's with the financing of their productions and the promotion. In the last five years, we've even helped them with Oscar campaigns. We're hoping to do that this year as well after Toronto, and the odds are pretty good that we will.

Quebec filmmakers like Xavier Dolan and Denis Villeneuve have said they emerged as directors when it was easier to find financing and an audience in Quebec. They've said it's harder to find both now, so they opt to make English-language films, even in Hollywood. How do you ensure the future of Quebecois film?





There's no recipe, but certainly we want to do more with film-makers coming from all regions of Canada. The idea behind the microbudget program [which provides financing of up to \$120,000 per project for first-time Canadian features] is exactly that. What happened in Quebec is, there's a star system there and people are aware of Denis Villeneuve and others. So we want people from Alberta to

know Kyle Thomas and for people from Saskatchewan to recognize Jefferson Moneo [director of *Big Muddy*, playing in the Discovery sidebar]. We want to connect more directly with the public. The first step is for the public to become aware of Canadian movies so they might decide whether or not to go see the films. Awareness is an important step, and the promotion we're doing is about that.

## Roll Call: The Great White North Showcases Its Talent at TIFF

28 Canadian features are playing at the Toronto festival this year, from a restored edition of Atom Egoyan's landmark Speαking Pαrts to Cannes Jury Prize winner Mommy to a doc about the Israeli army's hunt for 18 Palestinian cows











#### **Backcountry**

DIRECTOR Adam MacDonald
A busy executive and
her boyfriend head to
the woods for a weekend
retreat from the big city
and are pursued by a
predatory black bear.

#### Bang Bang Baby

DIRECTOR Jeffrey St. Jules A small-town teen is prevented by her alcoholic father from realizing her dream of fame.

#### Big Muddy

On the run from the cops and a former lover, an outlaw hides out with her young son until the son commits a horrible crime.

#### Corbo

DIRECTOR Mathieu Denis A teenage boy in 1960s Quebec evolves from a pro-independence activist to become a radical terrorist.

#### Crime Wave

DIRECTOR John Paizs
A filmmaker spends his
nights furiously typing out
the script for his dream
project in this restored
version of the 1985 film.

#### The Editor

DIRECTORS Matthew
Kennedy, Adam Brooks
In this parody of gory
Italian giallo thrillers, a
one-handed former master
film editor becomes the

prime suspect in a series of brutal murders.

#### **Elephant Song**

DIRECTOR Charles Biname
A psychiatrist is drawn
into a complex mind game
by a disturbed patient
played by Xavier Dolan.

#### An Eye for Beauty

DIRECTOR Denys Arcand Luc is a talented — and married — young Quebec architect who begins a torrid affair with a young Toronto woman.

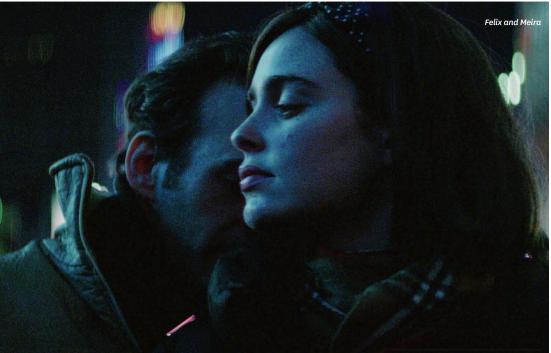
#### Felix and Meira

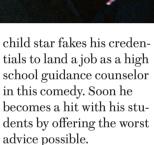
DIRECTOR Maxime Giroux A married woman from Montreal's Orthodox Jewish community resists the strictures of her faith.

#### Guidance

DIRECTOR Pat Mills
A drug-addled former







#### **Heartbeat**

DIRECTOR Andrea Dorfman A Halifax woman stuck in a dead-end job finds salvation through music.

#### In Her Place

A mysterious woman arrives at a Korean farm to stay with a mother and her strange teenage daughter.

#### Love in the Time of Civil War

DIRECTOR Rodrigue Jean A tale of Montreal drug addicts and sex workers seeking oblivion.

#### Maps to the Stars

DIRECTOR David Cronenberg A middle-aged actress tries to make a comeback in this Hollywood satire.

#### Mommy

DIRECTOR Xavier Dolan
A mother struggles to
care for her troubled
teen in this Cannes Jury
prize winner.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22







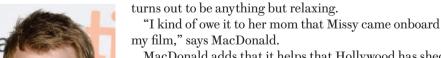
#### 'THIS WAS A DREAM TOO OUT OF REACH'

First-time feature director Adam MacDonald opens up about the thrill of having his film selected for the Toronto Film Festival lineup and why he owes his *Backcountry* star Missy Peregrym's mom big

MacDonald, who plays Detective Steve Beck on the Toronto-set television drama Rookie Blue, was searching for a lead for his feature directorial debut, Backcountry, he found one close to home: his Rookie co-star Missy Peregrym. MacDonald says from the get-go he wanted Peregrym to play the lead in his indie thriller about a young couple lost in the wilderness without food and water as a predatory black bear circles them.

But though the search was a short one, the casting became complicated as foreign financiers insisted on a bigger Hollywood name. Once MacDonald had convinced them that Peregrym was the right choice, there was another obstacle: convincing Peregrym.

"If I don't like [the script], I won't do it," Peregrym told her costar. "I only want to do projects I want to do." MacDonald remembers a sleepless night before Peregrym called the next day and announced that she needed to consult her mother for a second opinion. Fortunately, Mom ruled in MacDonald's favor and Peregrym took the role of Jenn, a busy executive from the big city whose weekend getaway



MacDonald adds that it helps that Hollywood has shed the stigma around TV work, now that U.S. cable dramas are clicking with audiences and critics alike. "Now [Peregrym] can do film and TV at the same time and be taken seriously," he says.

The 37-year-old previously had written and directed a short film, *In the Dominican*, starring two veteran Canadian actors, John Boylan and *Backcountry*'s male lead, Jeff Roop. To have his debut feature, which has

its world premiere Sept. 8 in the Discovery sidebar, selected for the Toronto lineup has exceeded his wildest expectations.

"I had dreams of being in Toronto one day, maybe as an actor," he says. "But screening *Backcountry* at the festival was just a dream too out of reach."

Until the call from festival programmers came.

"I was in the car and I had to pull over and I cried. It was a fantasy that came true," MacDonald says. "There's no other place, really, that films are taken so seriously. There's no better honor than that." — E.V.



#### JEAN-MARC VALLEE **RETURNS TO** TORONTO WITH *WILD*

The Montrealer shares his hopes for fest success a la Dallas Buyers Club, his plans to make a film back home and how he still feels like a kid 'playing with a camera'

EAN-MARC VALLEE SEEMED TO COME OUT OF nowhere last year with his critically acclaimed drama Dallas Buyers Club, which earned three Academy Awards, including best actor for star Matthew McConaughey. But the 51-year-old director burst on the scene in Toronto with the 2005 French-language film *C.R.A.Z.Y.*, about a young gay man dealing with homophobia in 1960s Quebec. Now his Fox Searchlight drama Wild, starring Reese Witherspoon in an adaptation of Cheryl Strayed's 2012 memoir about an 1,100-mile journey of self-discovery, is generating buzz heading into Toronto, where it will have its international premiere Sept 8. Vallee, who lives in Montreal with his wife and two children, next will direct Demolition about an investment banker coping with his wife's death.

#### How does it feel to return to the Toronto film festival?

I'm very happy to be back so quickly this year with another film. I can't wait to present Wild, with Reese and Cheryl and Laura Dern. I always say, I didn't choose Wild. Wild chose me.

#### How did you come to direct Wild?

It's a story that I felt comfortable with and I could be myself directing this film. And it was such a beautiful story that I wanted to be part of it badly. As a director, I try to be at the service of the story, and try to be humble and transparent and not steal the show with the camera or the editing. I try not to cut too much. That's what I mean by not interfering too much. I use long shots, I trust the acting and the storytelling. I shot this with a hand-held camera, with natural light, with no electrical, no grip crew. I used available light as much as possible.

#### What drew Reese Witherspoon, who's also producing, to the project?

Reese is at a place in her life where she's comfortable. She's happy. She's got everything. She wanted to find another challenge. That's what she tried to do with this film playing Cheryl. Get out of her comfort zone. And she went out there and she went wild. She went wild from A to Z,

playing physical and naked and a drug addict and a sex addict and having to go into cold, cold water and having no makeup and having the sun in her face. And she did it humbly, playfully and with so much humanity.

#### There was a lot of Oscar buzz around Dallas Buyers in Toronto last year. Are you hoping for the same with Wild?

I must admit, yes, I hope it will happen again, for my actresses, for the film, for Cheryl, for everyone that worked so hard on this film. This is not the reason why I do this. I'm just trying to do my job and make a film and be tight and professional and be creative on a daily basis. But then, yes, there's the promotion and

is, my family and my restaurants and my habits. ... I'm working on a French-Canadian project I hope I will do in the next few years. But there's some momentum right now after Dallas and Wild. I have something after Demolition in the States. So I have a few U.S. films back-to-back and then I'll



award season and then we open at Toronto with our fingers crossed.

#### Will you ever make another film in Canada?

Well, I still live in Montreal. I only shoot movies outside, and when I'm done I bring back the postproduction of American films to Montreal. That's where my home

do my French-Canadian project after that.

#### What was the last film that moved you?

I had such a blast watching *The* Grand Budapest Hotel. Wow, how creative can a director be? Wes Anderson. That guy just blew me away with the tone of his film, the characters, the acting, the editing, the music, my God.

#### What makes for a good director?

Tricky question. Tricky question. I'm not sure I should answer it.

#### Really?

Because if I answer it, then I see myself as a good director.

#### But you are a good director.

(Pause.) I guess I like directors that focus on trying to do the right thing for the project, and be at the service of the film and not showing off. OK, that's not true. I like to write scripts where I show off. I wonder if there's an answer to the question because there's so many different films because of so many different directors and so many different ways to use this medium that is so magical. At 51, I feel like a kid, still playing with a camera and editing and adding music to a film. It's toys, big toys.



#### Monsoon

DIRECTOR Sturla Gunnarsson This documentary looks at India's monsoon season.

#### October Gale

DIRECTOR Ruba Nadda
A doctor takes in a mysterious man after he arrives at her remote cottage with a gunshot wound. Soon she discovers his would-be killer is on the way to finish the job.

#### **Preggoland**

DIRECTOR Jacob Tierney A thirtysomething lies about being pregnant.

#### The Price We Pay

DIRECTOR Harold Crooks
The dirty world of
corporate tax dodging is
examined in this doc.

#### Songs She Wrote About People She Knows

DIRECTOR Kris Elgstrand A shy officer worker expresses herself by singing her feelings to friends and co-workers.

#### Speaking Parts

DIRECTOR Atom Egoyan
In this restored version
of the 1989 drama, a film
extra doubles as a cleaner/
gigolo in a hotel frequented by movie execs.

#### Teen Lust

DIRECTOR Blaine Thurier A high school boy needs to lose his virginity in a hurry once he learns that his Satan-worshipping parents intend to use him as a virgin sacrifice.

#### The Valley Below

**DIRECTOR** Kyle Thomas
Four vignettes chronicle
life in a small town in the
badlands of Alberta.



#### Trick or Treaty?

DIRECTOR Alanis Obomsawin
This documentary
investigates the tangled
history of Treaty 9, a
1905 agreement in which
First Nations communities gave up their lands
and rights because
of deceptions in the
original agreement.

#### Tu Dors Nicole

DIRECTOR Stephane Lafleur This drama follows a young college graduate in a dead-end summer job.

#### The Wanted 18

DIRECTORS Amer Shomali,
Paul Cowan
Using stop-motion
animation, drawings and
interviews, the directors
re-create the true story of
the Israeli army pursuing
18 cows during a conflict
with Palestinians over
milk production.

#### We Were Wolves

DIRECTOR Jordan Canning Estranged brothers are thrown together when they must pack up their late father's cottage.

#### Wet Bum

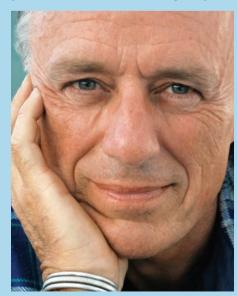
DIRECTOR Lindsay MacKay A teen outcast befriends residents of the retirement home where she works.





#### 'THIS LOVE-HATE THING WITH ENGLISH'

Quebec's Charles Biname, 65, on the pros and cons of French-language films and why he thinks Xavier Dolan, who plays a disturbed psychiatric patient in his festival entry *Elephant Song*, won't jump to Hollywood



How did you feel about directing in English? For me, it's something new. I spent six years in Toronto working on television series [Rookie Blue, Being Human]. So my environment has been certainly the English side of production.

#### What is it like making movies in Quebec today?

Working in Quebec is both a blessing and a limitation. When the film works, you have an audience that is quite faithful. Still, the numbers fluctuate, and the numbers [market share of Quebec films] are down to 3 percent right now. So I've been very lucky to be in the good years, with *Rocket Richard* [his 2005 biopic about the Montreal Canadiens















NHL star] and all those films, when we were nearing 13 percent of audience, which is enormous.

#### Making English-language films allows you to find an audience outside Canada.

You can go to festivals with Quebec films. But the irony is, when I went with one of my films, Eldorado, to Cannes and the Directors' Fortnight in 1995, the funniest thing I heard from French distributors was, "It's too bad you didn't do the film in English." We would have had a much larger audience in France, with subtitles. It's because they have this love-hate thing with English in France. So yes, we do have an amazing audience in Quebec. I love the moviegoing culture there. But once you travel a bit, you realize beyond festivals your films go nowhere because the audience is English-speaking. So this is a way to open up to something else.

Dolan shared the Jury Prize at Cannes with Jean-Luc Godard this year for his film

#### *Mommy*. Do you think he has ambitions to direct in Hollywood?

We never really talked about that. The U.S. is a particular territory. They are really hands-on and all over it and it's the producer's cut. And Xavier is really independent so far in his ways to the extent he designs his poster, he does the wardrobe and the edits and puts together his reels for promos. I don't know if by taking up a studio film, or even an independent film, that he would feel he would have the freedom he is used to.

#### What's next for you?

A film called *Earthly Justice* that I've been developing with a Toronto writer, Avrum Jacobson. It's like a Greek tragedy, about a very conservative environment that brews prejudice and will bring a father to do things he would rather not do, and which his son witnesses. It's very emotional, very beautifully written and it's character-driven, which I prefer for all my films.

## 'I Don't Want to Disappear'

Canada's female filmmakers share their fears and joys as they prepare to present their latest features at the fest

o have a story where the woman is at the center of action, where she's not relying on a husband or a boyfriend, that's important to me," says Ruba Nadda, director of *October Gale*. The thriller, which has its world premiere Sept. 11 at the Elgin Theater, reunites Nadda with her *Cairo Time* star Patricia Clarkson, in a story about a doctor who takes in a mysterious man (Scott Speedman) with a gunshot wound only to learn his would-be killer (Tim Roth) is on his way to finish the job.

Nadda, whose *Cairo Time* was named best Canadian feature at the 2009 Toronto festival, has a simple career strategy: keep busy. "I just don't stop. I just keep going. With features, you sometimes see women go away for 10 years. I don't want to disappear," she insists. "It's terrifying because it's easy to vanish."

Andrea Dorfman took just such a break from directing dramatic features — but spent the 11 years between her 2003 romantic comedy, *Love That Boy*, and her latest, *Heartbeat* (premiering Sept. 6), directing animation and documentaries. "I used to count at the Toronto festival among the Canadian films how many were by women," she says. "Sometimes it wasn't many and then it went up to 25 percent at the most."

But, she adds, "I personally have never felt held back as a woman filmmaker. We live in a great time for women to do anything in this country."

Jordan Canning made the jump from short films

to her first feature, We Were Wolves (bowing Sept. 9), by scraping together financing and shooting with a barebones cast and crew. "We wrote this film on a low budget so it could get made with a tiny crew and control," she says of her film about estranged brothers forced to face each other after their father's death. Canning hopes to have a bigger budget for her second feature while retaining creative freedom. "I don't know if we can get that kind of experience when you have a larger crew and [are] worrying about unions and money," she says. "[For Wolves,] it was just 11 of us on an island and in a cottage." -E.V.











#### BREVITY SHINES IN SHORT PROGRAM

Less is more as local filmmakers cover alternate dimensions, the cost of fame, the immigrant experience and death — each in under 20 minutes

o GET NOTICED AMONG THE dramatic opuses and large-scale sagas of the Toronto Film Festival, some Canadian directors are opting to keep it short.

Actor Ben Lewis (*Scott Pilgrim vs. the World*) will debut his first short film, *Zero Recognition* (10 mins.), about an actress trying to leave fame behind. Lewis says he found producing stressful, but not directing. "I surprisingly found being in control was very calming for me," says Lewis.

Orphan Black writer Tony Elliott is bringing Entangled (15 mins.), a sci-fi tale about a scientist, played by Christine Horne, who finds herself in alternate dimensions. The short has Horne's character on a split screen, performing the same actions with the same camera

movements in two different places.

His lightbulb moment for the concept came late at night after a long day in the *Orphan Black* writers room. "I was pulled in every direction, so I wished I could be in two different places at once," Elliott recalls.

"The first scene we did in a barn, and for the second scene we'd watch the playback," he adds, "and Christine would rush back on set and then we'd watch the playback and shoot and watch and shoot."

Elizabeth Lazebnik scored none other than Russian action star Alexey Serebryakov for her short *Liompa* (16 mins.), about a man on his death bed. Handily for the Toronto-based filmmaker, Serebryakov, the star of 2014 Palme d'Or contender *Leviathan*, lives in Toronto with his family. Lazebnik also cast Serebryakov's

young son Stepan in the film. "We needed a little boy and I saw him running around the house," says Lazebnik. "I asked him if he would do a role, and his family said yes."

Writer-director Michelle Latimer, meanwhile, found herself in a bind when she learned that feature-film rights already had been optioned for Rawi Hage's novel *Cockroach*, about an Iranian immigrant in Canada who's struggling to fit in. She contacted Hage and he agreed to give her the short film rights. Now Latimer will premiere her short, *The Underground* (13 mins.), in Toronto after debuting other work in Rotterdam and elsewhere.

"For me, Toronto is a big festival," says Latimer, "but I'm thrilled to premiere my film in my country first." - E.V.

## Jacob Tierney Debuts Comedy *Preggoland*

The 34-year-old filmmaker talks with *THR* about directing James Caan and collaborating with close friend and fellow Montrealer Jay Baruchel

# All your films have debuted in Toronto. How did you manage that? That's just good luck on my part. I don't get into too much festival snobbery, but every time you make a film, you want to create a great launching pad for it. The Toronto festival is definitely one of the great places to begin a film's journey.

#### How did you get involved with *Preggoland*?

I've known [writer-actress Sonja Bennett] for years; we've worked together as actors before. And I've always been a big fan. She sent me a script, and I loved it right away.

## Preggoland hinges on Sonja's character blurting out at a family gathering that she is pregnant — which is a lie. How did you and Sonja prepare for that scene?

[Sonja] had been working on the script for a while, thank God. We did some work together, but those major plot functions had already been established. And what I loved was Sonja had the balls to take her premise seriously, and not just be funny. She wanted to create a situation where you, as an audience member, would understand why this woman had allowed a lie to snowball out of control.

#### James Caan plays Walter, Sonja's character's father, in the film. What was it like directing him?

I had the great pleasure of working with him years ago on a film called *This Is My Father*. He played my uncle, and we shot the film in Ireland. He's such a good actor. And he's such an extraordinary presence, physically and emotionally. There's a lot of James Caan to go around. He's a big persona. ... He told me a lot what he was supposed to do. He's not a wilting petal, I'll tell you.

You've directed your friend Jay Baruchel in two films, Good



#### *Neighbors* and *The Trotsky*. Any plans for further collaborations?

Jay and I always have a few things in the works. He will be the lead in the next film that I've written and hopefully will direct. It will be called *American Music*, and he will star in that. And I'm attached to direct a script that Jay co-wrote, *Baseballissimo*. Jay and I are great friends, and we love working together. We both live in Montreal. We pretty much make each other laugh. So we're always looking for things to do because we enjoy working together.





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## REVIEWS





#### The Judge

CONTINUED FROM PAGE

As in any family drama that aims for emotional eruptions and third-act closure, there are skeletons in every closet, resentments in every pocket and regrets that bubble to the surface. Hank's brothers are big man Glen (Vincent D'Onofrio), a once-promising ballplayer whose major league dreams were thwarted, and Dale (Jeremy Strong), the runt of the litter whose mental incapacities leave him little to do but obsess over the family's home-movie collection.

Then there's their dad (Duvall), the imposing patriarch everyone calls "Judge" due to his eminent career on the bench. Although they share an interest in the law, Judge's preoccupation with justice stands in contrast to Hank's obsession with winning, which is just the professional aspect of the strain between the two gifted men.

"This family's a f—ing Picasso painting," Hank remarks at the wake before heading out to drink at the local bar, where he ends up making out with frisky waitress Carla (Leighton Meester). Little does he know that she's the daughter of his high school flame Samantha (Vera Farmiga), who later comes on strong as if they have decades-old unfinished business.

Other events also conspire to keep Hank downstate longer than he anticipated. Judge, who takes his first drink in 28 years, shows signs of unaccustomed memory loss; a local confronts Hank in the bar and soon after is discovered dead; Judge's car is banged up from an accident and blood is found on it, and it turns out the victim was a man who Judge once sentenced to 20 years.

Everything points to Judge having been the driver who hit the guy on the road, turning the town's role model into a possible criminal. Never above a sarcastic jibe, Hank allows that since he's "light in [his] pro bono service this year," he'll agree to help out a local greenhorn lawyer (Dax Shepard) who's hardly equipped to take on the smooth prosecutor (Billy Bob Thornton).

As attention shifts from Hank's superior attitude toward his family and hometown to Judge's deteriorat-

ing physical condition and potential culpability, Duvall's performance comes into its own. Never one to acknowledge weakness, Judge must finally confront his mortality, and there are intense father-son scenes that ask both Downey and Duvall to go places they have seldom gone onscreen, physically and emotionally.

Even more than usual, cinematographer Janusz Kaminski lays on the back light flare very thickly, while Thomas Newman's score is emotionally obvious. Posh Massachusetts locations stand in unconvincingly for the Indiana farmland setting.

Opening-Night Film

Cast Robert Downey Jr., Robert Duvall, Vera Farmiga, Vincent D'Onofrio, Jeremy Strong, Dax Shepard, Leighton Meester, Billy Bob Thornton

**Director** David Dobkin // 141 minutes

#### 5 ESSENTIAL ROBERT DUVALL PERFORMANCES By Frank Scheck



THE GODFATHER
1972

Duvall lost the 1972 best supporting actor Oscar to Cabaret's Joel Grey, but his performance as the Corleone family's trusted consigliere in Francis Ford Coppola's beloved mafia saga turned him into a critics' darling.



APOCALYPSE NOW 1979

He had only 11 minutes of screen time, but every montage of great moments in the history of cinema includes the scene from Coppola's Vietnam-set epic in which Duvall's Colonel Kilgore utters: "I love the smell of Napalm in the morning."



**THE GREAT SANTINI** 1979

Duvall nabbed a deserved best actor Oscar nomination for his commanding turn as a Marine fighter pilot who rules his family with an iron fist in Lewis John Carlino's adaptation of Pat Conroy's autobiographical novel.



TENDER MERCIES
1983

Duvall won his only Academy Award to date (best actor) — and left critics swooning — for his starring role as a broken-down, alcoholic Texas country singer in Bruce Beresford's 1983 drama. The actor does his own singing in the film.



THE APOSTLE 1997

Duvall wrote, directed, financed and starred in this 1997 labor of love, in which he plays a charismatic Pentecostal preacher. The role earned him another best actor Oscar nomination, but he lost to Jack Nicholson for As Good as it Gets.









#### Seymour: An Introduction

Ethan Hawke steps behind the camera for an affectionate documentary about a gifted, very private musician

BY STEPHEN FARBER

Ethan Hawke's first documentary, *Seymour: An Introduction*, is a modest but genuinely pleasant surprise. The film is a loving portrait of Seymour Bernstein, a concert pianist turned piano teacher, whom Hawke met at a dinner party a few years ago. A film was born, and IFC's Sundance Selects (the company behind Hawke's indie hit *Boyhood*) will distribute.

Hawke confessed to Bernstein at that dinner party that he was starting to experience severe stage fright, and Bernstein had struggled with the same fears during his performing career. That conversation led to a journey of discovery for the actor. Bernstein had won rave reviews during his performing career, but he decided to stop a few decades ago, when he turned 50. He had



already begun teaching, and that became his full-time profession. One of his former students, *New York Times* writer Michael Kimmelman, asks Bernstein if he found his true creative calling through teaching, and Bernstein confesses that he did.

Several sequences in the film depict Bernstein working with students, and these interludes show him to be critical but always supportive and giving. Two of his former students who went on to careers as prominent pianists, Joseph Smith and Kimball Gallagher, testify to his influence on them, and Bernstein's passionate devotion to music validates their testimony. Near the end of the film, Hawke persuades Bernstein to return for a recital at Steinway Hall in New York, and his powers appear undiminished.

So why did he quit? Bernstein suggests that the commercial side of performing disturbed him, and he also decided that the anxiety he felt before and during a recital were simply not worth the trouble. He tells a delicious anecdote about Sarah Bernhardt, who was once approached for an autograph by a younger actress. The young actress noticed Bernhardt's hand shaking, and she asked her idol how such a revered actress could still suffer from nervousness. Bernhardt reportedly replied, "You will get nervous

when you learn how to act."

Bernstein, who is now in his 80s, has lived in the same New York studio apartment for 57 years. One might want to know a little more about his personal history, but the film shies away from prying into his private life. Still, there are a few tantalizing hints. At one point Seymour recalls how much he was stung by his father's favorite way of describing his family: "I have three daughters and a pianist." But the film never asks any further questions about Seymour's sexual history. Still, if this approach isn't fully satisfying, Hawke clearly gained his subject's confidence because of his discretion. Hawke's film is very well crafted, tightly edited and elegantly photographed. The acute musical selections only add to our appreciation of Seymour's selfless devotion to his art.

TIFF Docs **Director** Ethan Hawke
81 minutes





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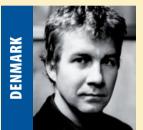
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#### Wild

Superb performances from Reese Witherspoon and Laura Dern anchor this finely crafted adventure

BY STEPHEN FARBER

Canadian director Jean-Marc Vallee has made only half a dozen films, but they demonstrate extraordinary range. Many directors specialize in one genre, but Vallee has plunged into wildly disparate arenas. He went from a coming-of-age story called C.R.A.Z.Y. to a lush historical epic, The Young Victoria. Last year's Oscar-winning Dallas Buyers Club explored a littleknown part of the history of the AIDS epidemic. Now in Wild, based on a best-selling memoir by Cheryl Strayed, Vallee has crafted a vivid wilderness adventure film that is also a powerful story of family anguish and survival. All of these films focus on very strong-willed individuals, but the completely different worlds they bring to life testify to an astute directorial hand.

Vallee's latest offering is alternately harrowing and heartbreaking, but laced with saving bursts of humor. The popularity of Strayed's book and the strong performance by Reese Witherspoon should ensure an audience for the movie and bring more accolades to the director, as well as to screenwriter Nick Hornby (About a Boy, An Education), who adapts the book with finesse. Fox Searchlight will open the picture later this fall, where it seems sure to figure in this year's awards race.

Dallas Buyers earned Oscars for both its lead and supporting actors, and it's conceivable that the new film could repeat the trick for two actresses. Witherspoon is actually a little old for the part of Strayed (a name the author adopted after fleeing a troubled marriage), who was just 26 when she decided to hike the 1,100 miles of the Pacific Crest Trail, from the Mexican border to the mountains of Oregon. But Strayed obviously had been through enough painful experiences by then to make



her look older than her years. Witherspoon transforms herself both physically and emotionally into this hardened yet needy young woman seeking to reinvent herself after a series of personal tragedies. Strayed chose this marathon hike almost on a whim and was completely unprepared for the challenges. As she wrote in her book, "I hadn't factored in my lack of fitness, nor the genuine rigors of the trail, until I was on it." Witherspoon captures all the conflicting, dizzying emotions that the adventure stirs in her.

Witherspoon is matched by Laura Dern, who plays her mother, Bobbi, an inspiring life force who is stricken with a devastating medical diagnosis. We learn of the closeness of their bond only gradually. The film begins with Strayed midway through her odyssey, undergoing some physical setbacks in the wilderness. Flashbacks take us back to the beginning of her journey and then much further back into her childhood and through her turbulent family and marital relationships. This fractured storytelling is getting to be overused in contemporary movies, but it happens to be faithful to the way that Strayed wrote her book, and Hornby and Vallee make the intricate transitions pointed and crystal clear.

Inevitably a film like this is going to be episodic, but the adventures that Strayed has on the trail are always startling, from her encounters with wildlife to the nightmare of a freak snowstorm. Yet the human encounters also enrich her journey, and here Hornby's ability to bring minor characters to life and Vallee's fine work with an extraordinary supporting cast make all of these episodes richly compelling. The director is helped by the exceptional cinematography of Yves Belanger, who takes us through varied landscapes from the scorching Mojave desert to the imposing mountains of Northern California and Oregon.

The film remains equally compelling during the flashbacks. Gaby Hoffmann as Strayed's supportive but skeptical friend and Thomas Sadoski as her conflicted husband make the most of their scenes, but it's really Dern who tears at our emotions during her scenes with Witherspoon. Bobbi's life journey, cut tragically short by illness, is as compelling as Strayed's. This is one of the most honest, complex portrayals of a mother-daughter relationship in any recent movie, and

the loss of her mother helps to explain Strayed's utter disorientation and her search for a major challenge to bring her back to life.

Witherspoon doesn't shy away from showing the dark sides of Strayed's character — her surrender to sexual excesses and drug addiction, including heroin. Her battle for survival began a long time before she hit the wilderness trail, so her journey illuminates a whole series of internal as well as external struggles. Witherspoon's inherent appeal keeps us on Strayed's side even through her self-destructive exploits, but there's nothing sentimental about the actress' tart portrayal.

The film has unmistakable parallels to Sean Penn's movie *Into the Wild*, and if this story is ultimately more uplifting, we always feel that Cheryl Strayed is just a few beats away from catastrophe. The profound precariousness of all her life's journeys is what makes her hard-won victory so stirring.

Gala Presentation

Cast Reese Witherspoon,

Laura Dern, Thomas Sadoski,

Gaby Hoffmann, Kevin Rankin

Director Jean-Marc Vallee

115 minutes

**KEVIN COSTNER** 

GARY OLDMAN

**TOMMY LEE JONES** 

RYAN REYNOLDS

**ALICE EVE** 

**GAL GADOT** 



THE CIA'S LAST HOPE IS IN THE MIND OF A

C

LIONSGATE'

DIRECTED BY ARIEL VROMEN WRITTEN BY DOUGLAS COOK & DAVID WEISBERG





#### The Humbling

A savage tragi-comedy starring Al Pacino as a washed-up stage actor gets its act together midway and becomes entertaining BY DEBORAH YOUNG

The Humbling started life as Philip Roth's 30th novel and one of his most poorly received works, dismissed by critics as little more than the sexual fantasies of an elderly man. Certainly not the most auspicious beginning for a film version, and these unfortunate origins probably have a lot to do with the wildly uneven tone and quality of Barry Levinson's tragi-comedy about the last roar of a once-great stage actor. Al Pacino runs riot here in the role of the self-absorbed Shakespearean performer. And his love story with a young lesbian who gives up women to bed him is nothing short of preposterous.

And yet, after an extremely buggy first half, Buck Henry and Michal Zebede's screenplay kicks in and an entertaining film emerges from the rubble. Once Pacino is surrounded by other characters, the comedy comes thick and fast and the material begins to come together in an absurd way. Though the film will not have the easiest time finding an audience, basically favorable critical response out of Venice should help spread the word.

One of the film's themes is the impossibility of separating art and life, and this bizarre potpourri is part Woody Allen sex comedy and part *Birdman*. There are some astounding coincidences with the new Alejandro G. Inarritu film, which also follows an aging thespian as he takes to the stage. Consider the opening scene, in which the drunken Simon Axler (Pacino) talks to himself in his dressing room mirror as he prepares to go onstage with

As You Like It just as Michael Keaton talks to his alter ego Birdman in his dressing room. Uncanny parallels continue as the camera cross-cuts from Simon to his image as though there were two men dialoguing with each other. Later, he throws himself off the stage, to the audience's horror.

The "accident" in the theater, followed by a botched suicide attempt, lands Simon in a posh rehab institute, where he discourses about losing his "craft" in group therapy sessions. There he meets Sybil (Nina Arianda), a spaced-out society woman who describes coming home and catching her model husband with his head up their little daughter's dress. She asks Simon to kill her husband, because he has so much experience with guns in his movies.

Simon is dismissed from rehab but stays in close touch with his psychiatrist, Dr. Farr (Dylan Baker), by Skype, a silliness used to fine comic effect. Having moved back into his spacious mansion in Connecticut, Simon is visited by Pegeen (a wonderful Greta Gerwig), whom he hasn't seen since she was 10. In the early days of his career he acted in a play with her mother. She may not be particularly smart or beautiful, but Pegeen is extremely good at getting what she wants, like a college teaching job which she secured by sleeping with the dean (Kyra Sedgwick). Though gay, Pegeen seduces Simon without a moment's hesitation and moves in, much to the chagrin of the love-sick dean and her own ex-girlfriend Priscilla, who is now known as Prince following a sex-change operation.

Pacino, though over-the-top in the Shakespearean scenes, does comedy like a master. The diverse scenes are unified by a wandering hand-held camera, which gives them a spontaneous documentary feel, in contrast to Adam Jandrup's dramatic theatrical lighting and its unreal glow. Music by Marcelo Zarvos is always fresh and interesting.

Special Presentation

Cast Al Pacino, Greta Gerwig, Nina Arianda, Dylan Baker, Charles Grodin, Dan Hedaya Director Barry Levinson // 113 minutes

#### **AL PACINO**

The Humbling star, 74, on his attraction to lonely roles, embracing getting older and what he wants for Christmas

By Ariston Anderson

You seem to be a happy guy. What drew you to play such a sad role? Seem? You should have seen me in my room this morning! I'm happy in that I'm not over happy. "On fortune's cap, [I'm] not the very button." Shakespeare.

#### Do you relate to the loneliness in the role?

What I can relate to is the idea that an actor is losing his desire and his appetite. Also as he gets older, he starts to lose and shed some of his tools, which is tantamount to an athlete losing his reflexes. And it's almost unbearable to him when he forgets his words onstage. It's humiliating and he starts to lose it and he wants to go back to peace and to

a life, which he's never had. Now for some reason there's something we find funny about that, an actor wanting to be a real person.

The Humbling explores the fear of getting older. Do you share that fear?

No. But I'm age appropriate. That's what you go by. I'm not playing a guy who's 50. But I do

think of myself as 40. That's when the clock stops. If I'm going to choose the happiest time to

be, it's 40. It's a great age. I don't want to talk about the movie or what it says, because I don't want to give it away. But there are wonderful things in that struggle that we can relate to, especially when one realizes the kind of prejudice about ageism, which I just can't take up with. I don't know why, but it's fine. Although if somebody said to me what do I want for Christmas, I'd say a rocking chair. Sometimes I feel like I could use a walker. But other than that, I'm fine.



#### **Madame Bovary**

Mia Wasikowska stars in the latest adaptation of the classic French novel, with lackluster results by todd mccarthy

Emma Bovary dies in the end, of course, but in this new film version she never even comes to life. Tedious, literal-minded and throwing no new light on Gustave Flaubert's oft-filmed 1857 novel about a young provincial woman's boredom, adulteries and extravagant spending, Sophie Barthes' English-language, French-made adaptation has the ever-watchable Mia Wasikowska but very little else going for it.

Although *Madame Bovary* is firmly ensconced in the pantheon of Western literature's greatest works, there's clearly something about it that resists satisfying adaptation to the screen, as it has defeated even such imposing talents as Jean Renoir, Vincente Minnelli and Claude Chabrol, not to mention the half-dozen other directors who have taken up the challenge over the decades.

Barthes, whose promising previous feature, *Cold Souls*, debuted at Sundance in 2009, does nothing to alter this history of

frustrated attempts to crack the Flaubert code. The director and her co-screenwriter Felipe Marino take a resolutely academic approach to their task, underlining whenever they can the feminist content that's already clearly evident in the text but providing no new insights into the central character's motivations (passion in reaction to a dull marriage), cultural and social aspirations (upwardly mobile, toward a large city, away from a village) and attitude toward money (heedless).

Once Emma is married off to small-town doctor Charles Bovary (Henry Lloyd-Hughes) and is unexcitingly initiated into obligatory sex, it doesn't take her long to begin ringing up large debts with local decorator M. Lheureux (a brash Rhys Ifans) as she goes about lavishly brightening up the place. It takes her only slightly longer to embark upon a passionate affair with a dashing marquis (Logan Marshall-Green) and then with a clerk of more modest



means, Leon (Ezra Miller).

Unfortunately, Barthes brings nothing new to the familiar story. What she does bring, along with cinematographer Andrij Parekh, is a dreary naturalistic palette; a nonhomogeneous group of actors hopelessly split along American, British- and French-accented lines; familiar observations about class and society divisions; and a decidedly unpersuasive rendition of a hunting sequence.

All this gives the amply talented Wasikowska less than a fighting chance to emerge from the debris with a convincing interpretation of one of the defining female figures of literature.

Her pale face gives her the gift of being able to look both beautiful and plain — the better to read much into her slightest expression — but the director doesn't realize that; the more she makes her leading lady emote, the less distinctive and unlike other actresses she becomes. Underplaying is Wasikowska's greatest strength, so the more the histrionics build, the less one engages with her.

Special Presentation
Cast Mia Wasikowska, Rhys Ifans,
Ezra Miller, Logan Marshall-Green,
Director Sophie Barthes
118 minutes

#### Gemma Bovery

Anne Fontaine's modern-day take on Flaubert's classic story is breezy and enjoyable by Jordan Mintzer

The time period and spelling may be different, but Gustave Flaubert's most famous creation is very much alive in *Gemma Bovery*, a breezy postmodern update of the classic novel that substitutes the book's darker passages for tongue-in-cheek laughs and plenty of eye candy — whether it's the sprawling Gallic countryside or Madame Bovery herself.

Adapted from Posy Simmonds' popular graphic novel, this enjoyable outing from hitor-miss director Anne Fontaine (*Coco Before Chanel*) stars British bombshell Gemma Arterton as the latest, and one of the sexiest, incarnations of French literature's favorite desperate housewife. But it's Fabrice Luchini, playing both neighbor and narrator, who steals the show, providing an amusing portrait of a man whose dual obsession with Flaubert and the woman next door leads to no good.

Family man Martin Joubert (Luchini) runs a bakery in a humdrum Normand town, where nothing much happens until a newly married couple moves into the country house across the street: British expat Charlie Bovery (Jason Flemyng) and his gorgeous younger wife, Gemma (Arterton). Seduced by Gemma's beauty, as well as by the fact that she nearly has the same name as Flaubert's heroine, Joubert starts keeping tabs on his new neighbor while striking up a friendship that's filled with sexual tension, at least on his part.

The script departs a bit from Simmonds'

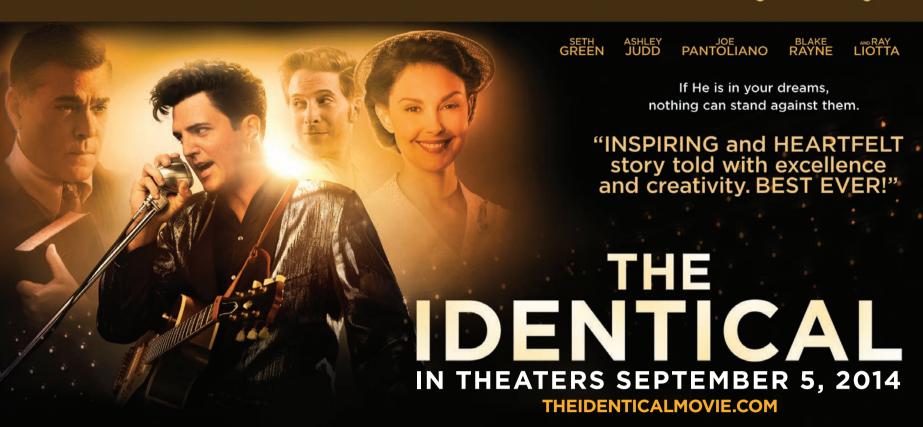


text to favor Joubert over Gemma, who never develops into a full-bodied personality. In that respect the movie also differs from the Flaubert original, while being much more lighthearted, though in both cases the Gemma/Emma character remains a cipher, a person onto whom the reader or viewer (or Joubert) can project their own desires.

Given the casting choice, that won't be difficult, and not since Jennifer Jones donned a corset in Vincent Minelli's 1949 version has a Bovary been this sensuous. It's rather too much at times, and the shapely Arterton never really conveys the stifling domestic existence that both Flaubert and Simmonds captured in their works. But her physique gives plenty of excuses for French comic ace Luchini to do his usual deadpan shtick, and Gemma Bovery is very much centered around his performance, offering up more laughs than any Flaubert-inspired work thus far. As pure entertainment it certainly does the job, although much of the text's existential weight is lost in the process.

Special Presentation
Cast Fabrice Luchini, Gemma Arterton
Director Anne Fontaine // 99 minutes

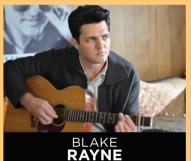
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#### 99 Homes

Andrew Garfield and Michael Shannon star in Ramin Bahrani's hard-hitting look at America's economic divide by TODD MCCARTHY

Carrying a title that implicitly references the 99/1 percent divide so frequently used to describe what ails the U.S. and much of the world, 99 Homes passionately remonstrates against contemporary economic conditions. While At Any Price, Ramin Bahrani's previous look at how tough things have become for so many working Americans, never found its audience, this, his sixth feature, might stand a better shot since it's pointedly designed to make your blood boil. In this it succeeds, partly legitimately and to some degree via ramped-up melodrama and a notably manipulative musical score.

The story is rooted in an ugly spectacle that's repeated time and again onscreen: the forced evictions of families from their homes for not keeping up with payments. The merits of each particular predicament aside, it's not possible to witness this process without being appalled by the severity of the method of carrying it out.

The first family seen to suffer the indignity of ejection belongs to Dennis Nash (Andrew Garfield), a construction worker who lives with his mother and son in the suburban Orlando ranch house in which he grew up. In these tough times, he's fallen three months behind with his bank, to the point that, accompanied by cops and the threat of immediate arrest for non-compliance, real estate broker Rick Carver (Michael Shannon) instructs the family to grab their essentials and hit the road.

Watching decent working people getting rudely turned out of their homes with no notice is so appalling that audience empathy is automatic. This kind of blunt-force presentation of the ramifications of certain governmental and banking policies over the past three decades is rare in commercially minded American films, so it's bracing to have it laid out so plainly as an everyday reality.

However, Bahrani undercuts his cause somewhat by sanctioning a cheesy electronic musical score that unnecessarily melodramatizes and cheapens the impact of the statement he delivers so passionately. As it is, Bahrani has still created an urgent work, the burning anger of which will viscerally connect with many viewers, who will recognize themselves or people they know up on the screen.

Special Presentation

Cast Andrew Garfield, Michael Shannon, Laura Dern, Noah Lomax Director Ramin Bahrani // 112 minutes

#### The Gate

French director Regis Wargnier's potent history of Cambodian war crimes compels viewers' attention

BY STEPHEN FARBER

Tales of political oppression are sadly relevant all over the world, and Oscar-winning French director Regis Wargnier (Indochine) presents a potent variation on this theme in The Gate, which looks back at the barbarous Khmer Rouge regime in Cambodia. Although the difficult subject matter may be off-putting to some viewers, the director's skill should entice a small art house audience.

Wargnier partnered with Cambodian producer Rithy Pran, who was nominated for an Oscar himself last year for his film, The Missing Picture. The Gate dramatizes the true story of French scholar Francois Bizot (Raphael Personnaz), who was imprisoned by the Khmer Rouge during that country's civil war and falsely accused of being a spy. His interrogator, an officer named Duch (Kompheak Phoeung), treats him ruthlessly but eventually becomes convinced that Bizot is telling the truth. Although Duch will not relent in torturing Bizot's Cambodian assistants, he eventually releases Bizot and allows him to return to his family. The film then moves forward to the victory of the Khmer Rouge and the forced evacuation of all French citizens. And there is a surprising coda years later when Duch is on trial for war crimes.

The film raises fascinating moral issues. At Duch's trial, Bizot learns that his interrogator is charged with the murder of more than 12,000 people. Yet Bizot owes his life to the fairmindedness of Duch during his period of captivity. This paradox of good and evil keeps the film resonating in our minds long after we leave the theater.

Wargnier has not lost the eye for visual composition that made *Indochine* so memorable. At a time when many directors overdo graphic atrocity footage, Wargnier is more restrained. A single scene where Bizot hap-



Personnaz (center) experiences rough treatment at the hands of the Khmer Rouge.

pens upon a pile of bodies and skeletons on the bank of a river encapsulates this entire dark chapter of history. Performances are also strong. Phoeung in particular is superb. The actor conveys intelligence as well as a capacity for brutality; we're held in suspense contemplating his complex nature.

The one failing of the film — a flaw that may keep it from achieving any real commercial breakthrough — is that it is more cerebral than emotional. Given the subject matter, one cannot help comparing this film to Roland Joffe's The Killing Fields, which had a searing visceral impact that this film lacks. More recently, The Railway Man, another story of war and reconciliation, was attacked by some critics for being too sentimental. But the conclusion of that film — aconfrontation between Colin Firth and his Japanese interrogator many years after World War II — was heartrending. The Gate never reaches that kind of emotional peak. Nevertheless, the profound issues that it raises means that it will not be easily forgotten.

Special Presentation

Cast Raphael Personnaz,

Kompheak Phoeung, Olivier

Gourmet, Thanet Thorn, Rattana
Sot, Boren Chhit, Dara Heng

Director Regis Wargnier

94 minutes

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## Before *Ghostbusters*, Ivan Reitman Scared Up a Canadian *Death Weekend*

VAN REITMAN HAS helmed comedy hits from Ghostbusters in 1984 to 2011's No Strings Attached, but in 1975 he found himself in rural Canada wrangling high-strung actors on a shoestring budget for William Fruet's horror-thriller Death Weekend (released in the U.S. as The House by the Lake). The film starred Brenda Vaccaro as a fashion model who is on a weekend getaway with her rich playboy boyfriend when they are captured and terrorized by a gang of brutal thugs.

Before producing *Death*Weekend, Reitman had directed two features of his own, the 1971 comedy *Foxy Lady* and the 1973 horror comedy *Cannibal Girls*, and produced friend and fellow Canadian David Cronenberg's 1975 debut feature *Shivers*.

Leading lady Vaccaro, says Reitman, "was a very tempestuous actress. She got in a big fight with [Fruet] and would not even talk to him ... so I became the go-between." Still, Reitman, now 67, has fond memories of that shoot and other early low-budget projects. "There's something about flying by the seat of your pants the way we did that is very energizing," he says. "It helped me a lot, to work on those early films. It made me more comfortable with being nimble."

It's a nimbleness he's passed on to his son, Jason Reitman, who's turned a string of low-budget films, including *Juno* and *Up in the Air*, which Ivan produced, into hits (the younger Reitman's latest, *Men, Women & Children*, has its world premiere

here Sept. 6).

"We actually just spoke a little while ago about doing more together," says Ivan, who is working on *Ghostbusters III*. "We complement each other in a certain way. ... It's been one of the greatest thrills of my life to have a son who's excited to make films." — JENNA ROBBINS

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